

Message Text

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INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 4333

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PORG MO UN

SUBJECT: GOM DELEGATION DEPARTS FOR NAC COLOMBO

REF: (A) RABAT 4270, (B) RABAT 4308

1. SUMMARY: GOM IS SENDING A STRONG DELEGATION TO COLOMBO TO ATTEMPT TO HEAD OFF ANTICIPATED ALGERIAN EFFORTS TO USE THE CONFERENCE TO UNDERMINE THE GOM'S SAHARA POSITION. AS PREDICTED, THE GOM APPEARS TO BE RELYING ON THE ARGUMENT THAT REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE THE MOST APPROPRIATE FORUMS IN WHICH TO DISCUSS THESE "BILATERAL" ISSUES. FONMIN LARAKI REITERATED THE GOM'S DEEP CONCERN OVER LIBYAN ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION. END SUMMARY.

2. A STRONG GOM DELEGATION TO THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE (NAC), LED BY FONMIN LARAKI, DEPARTED AUGUST 8. THERE WERE A FEW SURPRISES IN THE DELEGATION: THE MINISTER OF HABOUS AND ISLAMIC AFFAIRS WAS INCLUDED, PRESUMABLY TO DEAL WITH ARABS AND OTHER MOSLEM STATES; THE LEADER OF THE TWO LARGEST OPPOSITION PARTIES, USFP AND ISTIQLAL, WERE IN THE DELEGATION; THERE WAS ALSO A HEAVY SPRINKLING OF LEGAL, CONFIDENTIAL

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ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL EXPERTISE, AS WELL AS SOME

SAHARANS. THE COMPOSITION OF THE DELEGATION SUGGESTED THAT MOROCCO INTENDED TO WORK HARD IN THE CORRIDORS THIS TIME AND MIGHT HAVE A FEW TRICKS UP ITS SLEEVE, ESPECIALLY AS RELATES TO THE SAHARANS IN THE GROUP.

3. IN HIS AIRPORT DEPARTURE REMARKS, LARAKI RECALLED MOROCCO'S POST ADHERENCE TO AND ESPOUSAL OF NON-ALIGNED PRINCIPLES. HE EXPRESSED CONCERN, HOWEVER, AT "RECENT INTERPRETATIONS" OF THE MEANING OF NON-ALIGNMENT BY "CERTAIN COUNTRIES". THE FONMIN SAID MOROCCO EXPECTED THAT ALGERIA AND OTHERS "IN ITS ORBIT" WOULD RAISE THE SAHARA QUESTION AT COLOMBO. HE INSISTED THAT THE SAHARA QUESTION WAS OF NO CONCERN WHATSOEVER TO THAT CONFERENCE HAVING FOUND AN "ADEQUATE SOLUTION" DUE TO ITS ESSENTIALLY "REGIONAL CHARACTER".

4. MOROCCO WOULD FOIL ALL ALGERIAN EFFORTS, LARAKI PROMISED. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT ANY CONFERENCE OF THIS IMPORTANCE SHOULD RESTRICT ITSELF TO EXAMINING THE "GREAT PROBLEMS" OF THE THIRD WORLD, NOT "MARGINAL" ONES HAVING NOTHING TO DO WITH QUESTIONS OF MOMENT. THE NAC RISKED BEING TURNED AWAY FROM ITS "FUNDAMENTAL OBJECTIVES" BY SUCCUMBING TO SUCH "MANEUVERS", LARAKI WARNED. MOROCCO FELT THAT THIS CONFERENCE SHOULD "REDEFINE THE CONCEPT OF NON-ALIGNMENT" AND LARAKI ENDED BY EXPRESSING CONFIDENCE THAT THE MANY MEMBERS OF "GOOD-WILL" IN ATTENDANCE WOULD MAKE THE CONFERENCE A SUCCESS.

5. THE AMBASSADOR SAW LARAKI THE DAY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE, AUGUST 7, AND HEARD MANY OF THE SAME THEMES FROM THE FONMIN. LARAKI WONDERED WHAT WOULD BECOME OF THE NAC WITH THE EXPECTED ADMISSION OF SUCH "RADICALS" AS ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. HE SPECULATED THAT THIS SESSION COULD LEAD TO THE BREAKUP OF THE MOVEMENT.

6. ON THE SAHARA, LARAKI OUTLINED THE GOM'S STRATEGY PRETTY MUCH IN TERMS OF REFTEL A. HE SAID THAT THE GOM WOULD MAKE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO AVOID DISCUSSION OF THE SAHARA, FOR IT WAS A "REGIONAL QUESTION" WHICH HAD BEEN REFERRED TO THE ARAB LEAGUE AND THE OAU AND THE "RULES" OF THE NAC WERE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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LET REGIONAL GROUPS DEAL WITH THESE THINGS. HOWEVER, IF THE SAHARA WERE RAISED, MOROCCO WOULD ATTEMPT TO FOCUS DISCUSSION SOLELY ON THE "DETERIORATION OF THE SITUATION IN NORTH AFRICA AS A THREAT TO THE PEACE". THE SUDANESE WOULD ALSO RAISE THE LIBYAN-SPONSORED COUP ATTEMPT, AND "MANY OTHER" BILATERAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE INTRODUCED.

7. LARAKI EXPRESSED THE OFT-HEARD GOM CONCERN THAT THE

LIBYANS WERE VERY MUCH INVOLVED IN TRYING TO HELP ALGERIA GET "ITS WINDOW ON THE SEA" AND "SURROUND" MOROCCO. HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE LIBYANS WERE INVOLVED IN THE ATTACKS ON BOTH NOUAKCHOTT AND KHARTOUM. THE DILEMMAS LIBYA FACED IN ITS OPPOSITION TO MOROCCO AND EGYPT WERE ANALAGOUS: IT COULD NOT GO AFTER EITHER DIRECTLY, SO IT WAS SPONSORING ATTACKS ON THE WEAKEST LINKS.

8. THE FONMIN VOLUNTEERED THAT NO FORMAL DEFENSE PACT EXISTED BETWEEN MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT MOROCCO WOULD SUPPORT MAURITANIA, THAT IT HAD NO OTHER CHOICE IF IT WERE TO AVOID ALGERIAN/LIBYAN "ENCIRCLEMENT".

9. COMMENT: WHILE LARAKI'S COMMENTS WERE MORE OF A POLEMIC THAN A RATIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION FACING MOROCCO, THEY UNDERLINE RECURRING CONCERNS AMONG GOM POLICYMAKERS. FOREMOST AMONG THESE IS LIBYAN "ADVENTURISM", AND THE CONVICTION OF MANY HIGH LEVEL MOROCCANS THAT LIBYA IS OUT TO OVERTHROW THE MONARCHY.

10. THE INCLUSION OF TWO OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY CHIEFS IN THE NAC DELEGATION IS MORE SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF INTERNAL MOROCCAN POLITICS THAN IN WHAT LITTLE STRENGTH THEY LEND TO THE GOM DELEGATION. OF MORE THEATRICAL INTEREST IS HOW THE GOM MAY TRY TO USE ITS SAHARANS TO COUNTER POLISARIO MEMBERS IN THE ALGERIAN DELEGATION.
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